

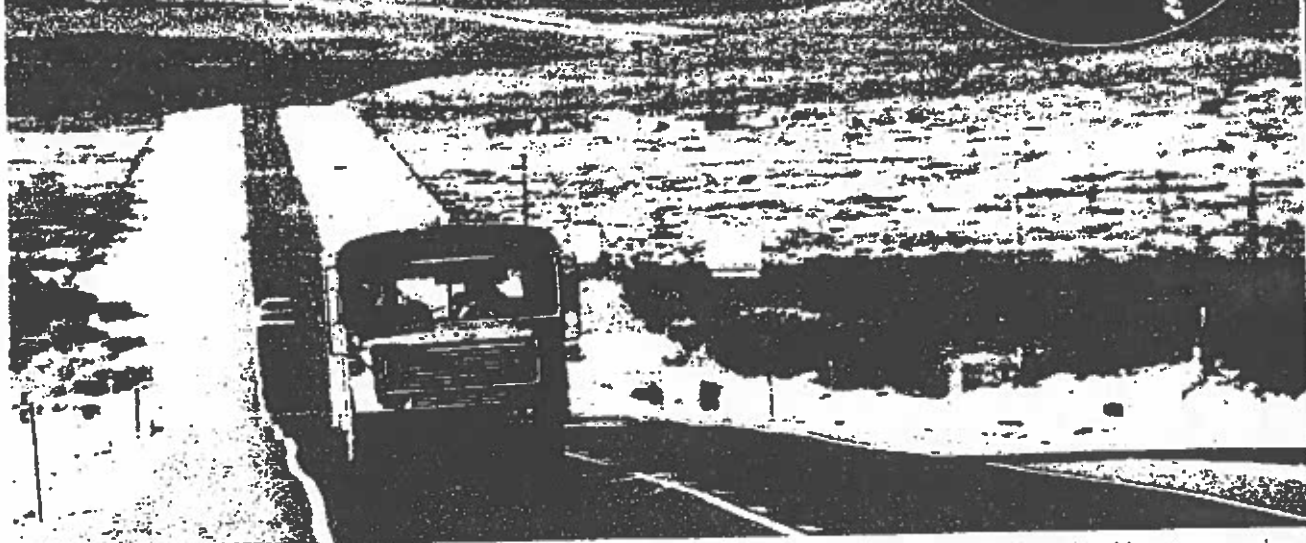
NATIONAL
ENQUIRER

September 12, 1995

\$1.29/\$1.59 CANADA

LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER IN AMERICA

KIDS SPEND 4 HOURS A DAY ON A BUS JUST TO GET TO SCHOOL



160 MILES FROM ANYWHERE school bus rolls along lonely Texas highway to get the students who take this trip every day.

High school students from Terlingua, Tex., really have to go that extra mile to get an education. They have the longest school bus commute in America — a four-hour, 160-mile round-trip!

What's more, Terlingua is wide-open ranching country and the students live as far as 17 miles from the highway where the bus stops.

Their parents have to drive them to the bus along bumpy single-lane dirt roads at slow speeds then pick them up after classes. That adds up to an

hour and a half to the round-trip.

"The students rarely miss the bus because their parents know they'd have to drive them to school themselves," said Wayne Milligan, local school superintendent.

Terlingua, population 500, doesn't have a high school. Students go to Alpine High School in Alpine, 80 miles away.

The school bus leaves at 5:30 a.m. sharp and that means the 20 high schoolers from Terlingua have to get up long before dawn. It's the start of a very long day.

"School recesses at 3:45 p.m. The students don't get back to Terlingua until 5:45 p.m. and some of them don't get home until 6:30 p.m.," said Milligan.

"But kids are used to long trips in

this part of the world. When their parents want groceries, they have to go to Alpine."

The National School Transportation Association, which represents school bus contractors, lists the Terlingua-to-Alpine run as the longest school bus trip in the nation.

On the road, students catch up on sleep or do homework. Senior Daphne Klingemann, 18, recalled that she once read Shakespeare's play "Macbeth" from cover to cover on one round-trip.

Jessica Garcia, 15, doesn't mind the long commute.

"I'll do anything for an education," she said.

"But getting up at 4:30 a.m. every morning is pretty hard."

— PHILIP SMITH